

GOD AND GOVERNMENT

Mr. Jenkins
Social Sciences
History 9
“Colonization”

Name: _____

The institutions of government and society that developed in the 13 colonies were to a great extent based on the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. But while the early English settlers in America were all at least nominally Christian, there were great differences among individuals. There was also a lack of consensus among the colonies about the practice and institution of religion and the proper relationship between religion and government.

In this activity you will apply your knowledge of the history and settlement of the colonies to a series of excerpts from law codes, religious treatises, and other colonial expressions of ideas on religion and government. You will use the ideas put forth in the selections to draw conclusions about the origins of American democratic institutions and church-state relations. As you continue your study of history, you will be able to explain the religious foundations of specific American institutions and ideals as well as the limits American democracy places on the application of religious doctrine in civil law.

Based upon the readings, text, and our discussions respond to the following questions on a separate sheet of paper. Use complete sentences to develop your paragraphs and provide specific examples as supporting evidence. Keep in mind the central question of the role between religion and government.

1. How does each pair of selections suggest the colony's idea of the appropriate relationship between government and religion?
2. Which colony's idea comes closest to the way in which most Americans view this question? In Virginia at this time the Church of England, known as the Episcopal Church in America, was established. It was the official church supported by the government, and everyone in Virginia had to pay a tax to it whether or not they were members. Discuss the apparent contradiction between this fact and the Robert Carter selection.
3. Imagine that three Americans from colonial times, a wealthy planter from Virginia, a Quaker shopkeeper from Pennsylvania, and a Puritan farmer from Massachusetts, all traveled by time machine to the America of today. What would each of them think about our system of government? What would each of them think about the relationship between government and religion in America today?
4. Write a dialogue about these questions that might take place among the three hypothetical colonials. Your effort should reflect the use of specific content and proper English writing skills.